

Samuel Tyman

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NOTES TOWARDS A MEDICAL HISTORY OF BURY.

[READ AT A MEETING OF THE BURY AND WEST SUFFOLK ARCHÆOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, JUNE 8, 1848.]

The science of medicine, in early times, was professed chiefly by monks and clerks in orders, because they alone were capable of reading the Latin works on the art of healing.

Baldwin, the builder of that magnificent abbatial church, the remains of which still excite our surprise and admiration, previous to his election as Abbot of Bury, acted as physician to King Edward the Confessor. Lydgate, the poet of the abbey, says he was "gretly expert in crafft off medycyne", and declares that "to many sicknes he did remedye". Among others, his hostile neighbour Herfastus, Bishop of Hulm, was indebted to his collirium for the restoration of his sight, though the monkish chroniclers attribute more efficacy to the favor of St. Edmund than to the skill of the Abbot. Archdeacon Herman* relates that—

"as the Bishop was riding and conversing with his attendants on some injuries meditated by him against the Monastery of St. Edmund, a branch of a tree struck his eyes, and a violent and painful suffusion of blood occasioned immediate blindness: St. Edmund thus avenging himself and punishing the temerity of the invader of his rights. Having long remained entirely blind, without the prospect of relief, the Archdeacon ventured to say to him, 'My Lord Bishop, your endcavours are useless, no collirium will avail; you should seek the favour of God and St. Edmund. Hasten to Abbot Baldwin that his prayers to God and St. Edmund may provide an efficacious medicine.' This counsel, at first despised, was at length assented to. Herman undertook the embassy, and executed it on the same day, the festival of St. Simon and St. Jude. The Abbot benignantly granted the request; and the enfeebled Bishop came to the monastery, being graciously received by the Abbot, and admonished by him to reflect, that as offences against God and St. Edmund were diminished, the medicine to be applied would more certainly alleviate his sufferings. They proceeded into the church, where, in the presence of the elder brethren, and certain peers of the realm, &c., the Bishop declares the cause of his misfortune; recites the injuries he had conceived against this holy place; confesses himself culpable; condemns under an anathema his advisers; and binds himself by a vow to reject such counsels. He then advances, with sighs and tears, to the foot of the altar; replaces [surrenders] on it the pastoral staff; prostrates himself before God and St. Edmund; performs his devotions, and receives absolution from the Abbot and Brethren. Then having made trial of the Abbot's medicine, and, as I saw, by the application of cauteries and colliriums, assisted by the prayers of the brethren, in a short time he returned perfectly healed; only a small obscurity remaining in the pupil of one eye as a memorial of his audacity."

Another eminent practitioner connected with the abbey was Walter the Physician, who is mentioned by Jocelin de Brakelond as contributing "much of what he had acquired by his practice of physic" to the erection, in 1198, of the

* Regist. Rub. Coll. Bur. 330, &c.—Yates's Hist. Bury Abbey, p. 99.

new stone almonry, or guest-room for indigent strangers. His contemporaries, however, were not all equally skilful; for the same amusing chronicler, recording the accident which happened to Abbot Hugh, while on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, in 1180, says the “physicians came about him and sorely tormented him, but they healed him not.” The poor old Abbot, it seems, had fallen from his horse, and his knee-pan being put out was lodged in the ham of his leg. He was removed to Bury, where “his thigh mortified and the disorder mounted to his heart; the pain brought on a tertian fever, and on the fourth fit he expired*.”

Leprosy, a disease now almost extinct in Europe, was one of the most fearful scourges of the middle ages. It was so prevalent that at one time there were no less than 9000 houses in Europe for the reception of lazars or lepers. The hospital of St. Peter without the Risby gate was founded for the maintenance of leprous priests, and the hospital of St. Petronilla, or St. Parnell, without the South gate, for leprous maidens. A cure of the disease was then deemed unattainable.

The monks of Bury, with the *obedientiarii*, were well cared for in times of sickness. An Infirmarer, or Curator of the Infirmary, was an established officer; a large stone building, of many apartments, “fitted up with every convenience”, was built in 1150, by Hugo the Sacrist, “below the great churchyard”, for an Infirmary or *Nosocomium*; and the Vineyard, the site of which is still partially surrounded by the original wall, was purchased in the same century by Robert de Gravelle, another Sacrist, “for the solace of the invalids.”

* “The extraordinary helplessness of early surgery is little appreciated by us, nor are we duly grateful for the advance in that most noble study which now secures to the lowest and poorest sufferer alleviations once inaccessible to the wealthiest and most powerful. An example in point occurs to me in the case of Leopold, Duke of Austria, the captor of Cœur de Lion, in 1195. A fall from his horse produced a compound fracture of the leg, which, from the treatment it received, soon mortified. Amputation was necessary, and it was performed by the Duke himself, *holding an axe to the limb*, which his chamberlain

struck with a beetle. ‘*Acciti mox medici apposuerant quæ expedire credebant: in crastino vero pes ita denigratus apparuit, ut a medicis incidendus decerneretur, et eum non inveniretur qui hoc faceret, accitus tandem cubicularius ejus, et ad hoc coactus, dum ipse dux dolabrum manu propria tibiae apponeret, malleo vibrato, vix trina percussione pedem ejus abseidit.*’—Galt. Heming, i. 210.—Wendov. iii. 88. We feel no surprise that death followed such treatment, even without the excommunication under which the savage duke laboured.”—Kemble’s *Saxons in England*, ii. p. 433.

One of the chief sanitary regulations of the house enjoined a periodic “blood-letting” (*tempore minucionis**); at which time there was a general blood-letting†, and the gush of the living stream appears to have been accompanied by a corresponding flow of secrets; for our entertaining friend Jocelin writes :

“I observed Sampson, the Sub-sacrist (afterwards the famous Abbot), as he was sitting along with others (since at these private assemblies, at blood-letting season, the cloister monks were wont mutually to reveal to each other the secrets of the heart, and to talk over matters with every one), I saw him, I say, sitting along with the others, quietly chuckling, and noting the words of each, and after a lapse of twenty years, calling to mind some of the before-written opinions.... Upon one particular occasion I was unable to restrain myself, but must needs blurt out my own private opinion, thinking that I spoke to trusty ears.... And behold one of the sons of Belial disclosed my saying to my friend and benefactor; for which reason, even to this day, never could I since, *nec prece nec pretio*, fully regain his good-will.”

The manner in which this blood-letting was performed, is related in the following extract from a MS. entitled “*Liber Albus Monasterii B. S. Edmundi*”, preserved in the Harleian collection at the British Museum, No. 1005, fol. 193 b., for which, with the accompanying translation, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. John Gough Nichols :—

DE MINUTIS SANGUINE.

Prima die sint minuendi in choro usque post ewangelium, et tunc faciant ante et retro et exeant; et cantent vespervas si sit in xl^a. et si sit aliud tempus anni cantent vj^{am}. et tunc faciant oracionem ante altare beate Marie. Si conventus non sit super formas fiat oracio tantum inclinando; si super formas tunc faciant oracionem cum longa venia. Postea eant in dormitorium, et si debeant comedere in refectorio debent capere nocturnalia sua et cingula nocturnalia. Debent‡ pergentes in infirmariam debent deponere froggos suos ibidem et ponere super bancum ex parte orientis, primo priores versus ostium celarij infirmarie, deinde ceteri prout se habuerint in ordine. Si autem debeant comedere extra refectorium, tunc nichil mutabunt, sed directe pergent in infirmariam ut dictum est. Deinde ad minutorium. Cum autem minuti fuerint, si debeant comedere illac, capient froggos suos et facient quod sibi visum fuerit utile et honestum; si in refectorio, captis froggis adibunt parvum locutorium et ibi sedebunt ad terram donec venerit hora reficiendi. Prior illorum qui sunt minuti sedebit in angulo, et ceteri prout sunt hac et illac. Si autem abbas vel prior illa die ad eos accesserit, aut quivis alius, non debent assurgere ei prima die qui minuti sunt.

De j^a. die. Prima autem die minucionis non debent minuti esse in conventu nisi ad prandium, et tunc eunte conventu in ecclesiam cum *Miserere mihi deus*, ipsi divertere

* Among the officers of the Infirmary are enumerated “*Minutor, cum garcione.*”

† The blood-letting house of the Monastery of St. Gall, appears from a plan made in the 9th century (Archl. Journal, v., p. 3), to have been a large quadrangular apartment, furnished with six tables, *mensæ*, and the same number of benches, and heated by four stoves in the corners. It was separated by a wall or fence from the “*Domus Medicorum*”,

or dwelling of the physicians, behind which was the physic garden; all in the north-east corner of the Monastery. The Infirmary of Bury Abbey was, says Gillingwater (Hist. Bury, p. 97), in St. Edmund's Fields, on the north side of Eastgate Street; and the Vineyard, for the solace of the invalids, was at the north-east corner of the Abbey precinct.

‡ Sic MS. *forsan pro* Deinde.

debent ad librum ante altare beate Marie et ibi percantare gratias suas et tunc redire ad parvum parlorium. Si vero comederint in refectorio, interesse debent lectioni collacionis. Si dies solempnis jejuniij fuerit, lecta lectione debent capere licenciam ad ostium capituli nisi mandatum fuerit ipso die; tunc ij debunt ire cum conventu in refectorio, et esse ad illum potum, et capere licenciam ad ostium refectorij; et hæc est generalis regula semper quando potus sequitur lectionem. Sed si solempne jejunium sit, tunc tam illi qui comedunt in infirmaria quam illi qui in refectorio interesse debent lectioni et potui supradictis. Si vero jejunium solempne non* sit, ipsi qui comedunt in infirmaria tantum ad lectionem accedent. Sed si duo fuerint potus, ad primum nullo modo accedent minuti. Si tantum unus, constitutum fuit in capitulo in crastino sancti Gregorij, A.D. M^o. cc^o. xlvij^o. quod ipsi qui comederint in refectorio potabunt cum conventu ad illum potum. Qui autem alibi ubi se refecerunt. Minuti venientes ad mandatum debent intrare quando ipsi exeunt qui pedes laverunt; sed lavacioni manuum debent interesse.

De ij^a. Et quod dictum est de prima die, idem considerandum est de secunda die.

De iij^a. Tertia die, si alta prima fuerit, non debent interesse alte prime, sed post oraciones ante iij^{am}. intrent, quia ipsi oraciones illas cantabunt privatim ante altare beate Marie, et dicto versiculo post capitulum. iij^e. exeant ad claustrum†. Ad vj^{am}. sint, et cum pulsatum fuerit ad ix^{am}. et xl^a. fuerit cantent illi ante altare sancte Marie ix^{am}. et vespervas, nisi processio sit eadem die, ut feria iij^a. et vi^a. et tunc non erunt ad ix^{am}. sed privatim dicent ix^{am}. inter se, ut dictum est. Et debent intrare chorum cum cantor inceperit *Exurge Domine*, et discalcient se, et sint in ordine suo ad processionem. Finita processione, exire debent et comedere ante conventum. Post prandium suum, dum conventus comederit, esse debent in parvo parlorio, quia non possunt alibi loqui nisi super hoc spiritualiter fuerint licenciati. Post prandium vero servitorum si cantatur *Dirige*, cum conventu esse tcnentur, et ad potum post *dirige*. Si extra refectorium comederint tertia die, non sint ad potum cum conventu, sed ad dirige.

CONCERNING THOSE THAT ARE BLED.

On the first day those about to be bled are to be in the choir until after the gospel, and then make obeisance, before and behind, and go forth; and they shall chant vespers if it be in Lent, and if it be another time of the year they shall chant sext, and then shall make their prayer before the altar of the blessed Virgin. If the community be not upon the forms (?), the prayer shall be made with bending only; if it be upon the forms, then they shall make the prayer with the long prostration. Afterwards let them go into the dormitory, and if they ought to eat in the refectory, they ought to take their night clothes and their night girdles. Then proceeding into the infirmary they ought to put off their frocks there, and place them on the bench on the east side; first the foremost next the door of the cellar of the infirmary, then the rest as they come in order. But if they ought to eat without the refectory, then they shall change nothing, but shall proceed at once into the infirmary as aforesaid. Then to the bleeding room. And when they have been bled, if they ought to eat there (in the infirmary), they shall take their frocks, and do as seems to them good and right; if in the refectory, taking their frocks, they shall go to the little parlour, and sit there upon the floor until the hour of refecton arrive. The first of those who are bled shall sit in the corner, and the rest as they are, here and there. But if the abbat, or prior, or any one else, should come near those that have been bled that day, they need not rise to him for the first day.

[*Further*] *respecting the first day.* On the first day of bleeding those that are bled need not be in convent except at dinner; after which, when the community goes into the church with *Miserere mihi Deus*, they ought to turn aside to the book before the altar of the blessed Virgin, and there chant their graces, and then return to the little parlour. But if they eat in the refectory, they ought to be present at the reading of the collation‡. If it should be a day of solemn fast, after the reading of the lesson they ought to take leave at the door of the chapter-house, unless there

* *Hoc verbum non deletur in MS., sed in errore?*

† *Hæc verba ad claus. delentur in MS.*

‡ The *collacio* is the same as is presently called the *lectio* or lesson, a short homily or expositon of scripture.

should be a maundy* on that day: in which case they ought to go with the community into the refectory, and be at that potation, and take leave at the door of the refectory; and this is the general rule always when a potation follows the lesson. But if it should be a solemn fast, then as well those who eat in the infirmary as those who eat in the refectory ought to be present at the aforesaid lesson and potation. But if it should not be a solemn fast, those who eat in the infirmary shall come only to the lesson. But if there should be two potations, those that are bled shall on no account come to the first. If only one, it was ordained in chapter on the morrow of saint Gregory, 1247, that they who eat in the refectory shall drink with the community at that potation; but those who eat elsewhere, in that place, wherever it be. Those who have been bled, on coming to the maundy, ought to enter when those go out who have washed the feet, but they ought to be present at the washing of hands.

Respecting the second day. And what has been said of the first day, the same is to be observed of the second day.

Respecting the third day. On the third day, if there be high prime, they need not be present at high prime; but after the prayers before tierce they shall come in, because they shall themselves chant those prayers privately before the altar of the blessed Virgin, and the versicle having been said after the chapter of tierce, they may go forth [to the cloister]; they shall be present at sext; and when the bells are rung for none, and it happens to be Lent, they shall chant, before the altar of the blessed Virgin, none and vespers, unless procession should occur on the same day, as on a Wednesday or Friday, and then they shall not be present at none, but shall say none privately among themselves, as is aforesaid. And they ought to enter the choir when the precentor begins Exurge Domine, and put off their shoes, and be in order for the procession. The procession being over, they ought to go out, and eat before the community does. After their dinner, whilst the community is eating, they ought to remain in the little parlour, because they cannot speak anywhere else, unless they should be spiritually licensed for that purpose. But after the servitors' dinner, if Dirige be chanted, they are bound to be with the community, and at the potation after Dirige. If they eat without the refectory on the third day, they are not to be with the community at the potation, but only at Dirige.

A faith in the blood-letting season prevailed even into the present century. An octogenarian author, deceased within the last few years, was so impressed with the importance of this process at stated seasons, that he had his man-servant instructed in the art, and he himself superintended the “periodic blood-letting” of his household.

Originally the chirurgic art and that of shaving went hand in hand, as they do to this day in several parts of Europe. The barbers in London, says Pennant†, were incorporated by Edward the IVth in 1461, but finding that numbers had crept in among them less skilled in the lancet than the razor, from the want of power of examining into the skill of the chirurgical members, they obtained a new charter from Henry the VIIIth, in which both professions were

* This *mandatum* was a potation (as it is termed in the next line), accompanied with the ceremonies of washing feet and hands, in imitation of our Lord.

† Holbein's picture in the Hall of the College of Surgeons—one of the artist's finest works—represents the barber-sur-

geons receiving their new charter from the king.—See also Don Quixote, part i. book iii. ch. 7; and Arabian Nights—Story of the Hunchback (Lane's Edn., vol. i. p. 372.

‡ Hist. London, 255.

united. By this charter barbers were not to practise surgery further “than drawing of teeth and blood-letting, and that only at a distance of one mile from London, and surgeons were strictly prohibited from the fact or craft of barbery or shaving. The painted poles which are still occasionally to be seen on the outside of barbers’ establishments, are believed to have a reference to the phlebotomizing branch of the profession—the pole representing the stick which the patient grasped with his hand to cause the necessary effusion of blood; and the spiral coloured band, the ribbon or bandage which was bound around the arm to stay it. Some authors assert that the barbers hung their basins out at the ends of these poles, as a sign. The will of Andrew Cranewyse, a barber of this ancient town* who died in 1558, mentions his “hanging basins, of latten”, but as he had twelve of them to devise, there must have been some other use for them.

“It’m I giue, will, and bequeath to my sonne John Cranewyse all that my ten’t wth thapp’ten’nces in Bury aforesaide, in the strete there called the Mustowe, wherin Robert Jollye, the sonne of my saide wife, now teachethe children, to haue and to holde the saide ten’t wth thapp’ten’nces to the saide John my sonne, his heires and assignes for ever. It’m I giue and bequeath to the saide John, my sonne, syxe hanginge basons of latton, iij wassinghe basons of latton, iij barbors potts of latten, tenne shavinge clothes, one hone, and my case wth knyves holle. It’m I giue and bequeath to the saide John my sonne my brasen mortar and my leaden mortar wth the pestells, the bedde holle complet that he lieth in, iij barbors chaires, a dryeng bason as it standeth, my case wth instruments p’teyninge to surgery, wth all my glasses and boxes belonginge to the same. It’m I giue and bequeath vnto the saide John my sonne a great cofor in his custodie all readie, and a meane cofer standinge at my beddes feet in my chamber, wth locke and key there vnto, also my foulte table in the p’loure, ij molver stones wth the runners, one postnet of brasse y^t I boile my salve in. (All theise p’ticuler things to him before bequeathed to be delyvered to him the saide John wⁱⁿ a quarter of one yeare after my dep’ture.)”

“It’m I bequeath to Rob’t Jolly my wifes sonne, vj hanginge basons of latton, ij wassinghe basons of latton, ij barbor’s potts of latton, one rounde molvor stonne wth a runnor, ij barbors chaires, and one fyne hone; all w^{ch} things I will to be delyvered to the saide Rob’t wⁱⁿ one moneth after my decease.”

The use of the hanging bason is shown in the representation of the interior of a German barber’s shop, by Jost Amman, engraved as a vignette to this paper, where a man, whose head has been shaved, appears kneeling on the second step of a piece of furniture resembling modern bed-steps, and holding his head over a large basin let into the top, while water trickles down upon it from a bason hanging by a hook to a peg projecting from the wall, and the barber rubs it with a cloth.

* A portion of the present Abbeygate Street was formerly known as “Barbers’ Row”

Even barber-surgeons were so few, that the poor could rarely obtain any “skilled” advice and assistance, being constrained, according to a writer of the time of Henry the VIIIth, to resort to “sow-gelders, horse-gelders, tinkers, and cobblers”, with old women and their simples. Many “extraordinary cures” are related to have been performed by them. In Bury St. Edmund’s, when any wonderful case was successfully treated, the Guildhall Feoffees—then ever ready to relieve the town of an extra burden—stepped in, and remunerated the fortunate “healer.”

In their Accounts for the year 1575 occur these two entries:

“xxvjs. viij*d.* paied to John Bearham for the healinge of a pore dyseased wenche.
“xiijs. iiij*d.* to Liechefilde for the healing of Clayden’s legge.”

Lichfield, it appears, was a professional man; for in 1581 we find

“xls. to Lichfild surgen for curinge of a pore man grievously skalt wth hote water.”

In the following year a travelling female practitioner divided the emoluments as well as the honour: there was bestowed

“xlixs. vpon a woman surgen of Colchester and Lychfild for curing of the wife of John Willye of Bury, sherman (doubtless a respectable burgess), and diuerse other.”

The following items occur in the Accounts of the same body between the above period and the year 1622:

“1584. lvjs., viij*d.* bestowed in chirurgery for the curing of Tosse and his wife, of Willis infected wth the Frenche pocke.”

“1596. xs. to Atkin for setting of Godfreis legge w^{ch} was broken.”

“1597. xxs. to old Wretham for cures of certeine poore diseased p’sons.”

“1606. ijs. to Dickenson’s wief for taking in hand of a poore woman to hele hir of a fistula.”

“1614. xs. to Ambrose Lichefeild for healinge of a poore woman’s legg sore hurt wth a boare.

“iijs. given to Johnson a poore man in relief that went to the bathe.”*

“1618. To Oliver Tebold for healinge Butteries daughter of the falling sicknes.”†

Previous to the Commonwealth, the observance of Lent was rigidly enforced by Acts of Parliament and royal proclamations; but afflicted persons might obtain licenses “to eate fleshe” on putting the sum of 6*s.* 8*d.* into “the poor

* Went to the famed city of Bath, where, till the year 1742, when the General Hospital was founded, the poorer sufferers who went to the bath were in a great degree dependent upon the charity of their richer fellow-patients. Bishop Ken, in 1685, published a volume of

“Prayers for the use of all persons who come to the baths of Bath for cure”, in which petitions are offered “for destitute persons unable to avail themselves of the waters from want of means”.

† Epilepsy?—See *Gent. Mag.* 1848, i. p. 384.

men's boxe" of their parish church. Several licenses are preserved in the registers of St. Mary's parish in this town, one of which, granted in 1566, to Henry Payne, Esq., of the College Hall, College Street, recites as the cause "the sharpness and burnynge of his vryne"!*

The same registers record the death, in 1654, of a child of William Canoyes who had been "cut of the stone"; and in 1662 the death of "Ann the wife of Thomas Raison who had a stoone taken from her when she was dead that did waighe 2 pounds 3 quarteres". The late Sir T. G. Cullum, Bart., in 1780, had a very large rough purplish stone which was found in a grave in the churchyard, Bury, and was supposed to have dropped out of a decayed body; and the late Rev. G. Ashby, of Barrow, saw in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, a stone taken from a locksmith's wife at Bury St. Edmund's, after death, which weighed 33 oz. 3 dr. 36gr. troy, and had the appearance of having had a piece broken off equal to half an ounce at least. A wager had been won that it was bigger than the then College rolls.†

Bury suffered severely from the Plague on several occasions. In the year 1257, one thousand persons died of it. In 1557 there was a great mortality; and from August, 1578, to March, 1579-80, as many as 164 persons are entered in the St. Mary's register alone as dying of it.‡ Entire families were swept away. In 1587, the plague again appeared; when the infected inhabitants were removed to tents erected for their reception in the fields around the town. On this occasion the Guildhall Feoffees bestowed 10*l.* 3*s.* "towards the charges of the kepers and bearers, and in the reliefe of the poore beinge visited with sikeness"; and "paid 5*s.* to Joseph Nunne for a loode of pooles bought of hym & imploied abowt the making of tents for thinfects". In the St. James's Register 89 deaths from plague are entered from April to November in this year; of which number 37 are in August, 24 in September, and 17 in

* Mr. Payne died two years afterwards, and was buried at Nowton, of which he possessed the manor and advowson.—*Hist. Thingoe*, p. 490.

† Ashby's MS. notes on Bury.

‡ In the St. James's Register only 30

are recorded as dying of the plague between September, 1578, and September, 1579. In the latter month there is no entry; but in August 4 out of the 7 deaths have the plague-mark prefixed.

October. The first death in April was an inmate of "the sick-house." In 1592, 1603, and 1605-6, its victims were but few; but in 1637 the sufferings of the town were very great. Four hundred and thirty-five persons are entered in the St. Mary's register as dying between July and December, the months of greatest mortality being August and September. The entries are not so clear in the St. James's Register; but in the month of May is this marginal note against the name of "Christopher Langrigg, 5th day", "This was the first person that was supposed to dye of the plague in the Risbygate street". Many of the dead appear to have been buried on the site of St. Peter's Hospital, without Risbygate street. On the 29th May, two females are entered as "buried at St. Peter's"; and in the following month the plague entries, seven in number, are thus prefaced:—"The names of such as either are known or supposed to dy of the plague this present June, buried at St. Peter's or in the churchyard without solemnity." In the month of August, there are 28 entries; 47 in September; 34 in October; 16 in November; and 15 in December. In the margin opposite this month is written "Here the plague stayed in this parish, God be thanked"; but in another hand is appended "for a while". From the brief, dated Nov. 27, 1638, granted by the king for a general collection over the kingdom, it appears that

"almost all y^e ehiefest inhabitants and tradesmen of Bury St. Edmund's being withdrawn into the country for fear of infection of the plague, yet there were 4000 persons remaining unvisited, and 103 families shut up, 117 sick of sores and under cure at that time, besides 439 persons that had been cured, above 600 dead, and 263 families then infeeted, all of them to be maintained at y^e eommon charge of the said town at the expense of above 200*l.* per week, and they had already disbursed above 2000*l.* So they desired relief."

The following items in the will of Francis Pynner, gentleman, dated 26 April, 1639, will convey some idea of the state of distress into which the town was placed by this awful visitation:—

"Item: Whereas my late wife's kinsman, Franeis Potter, of Bury St. Edmund, baker, at the late heavy visitation did take great paines about me in the time of my trouble, in reguard I eold gett noe body to help me, & that all my houshold fledd from me & left me both comfortles & helples (in respect that at that time I had my man dyed of the sieknes), when my selfe & my wife were boeth lame. In considerac'on thereof I haue infeoffed the said Francis Potter & his heires for ever in twoe messuages or tenem^{ts} in Bury St. Edmund aforesaid, in th'oocupae'ons of the said Franeis Potter & John Kinge, the said Franeis Potter payeing vnto mee the said Francis Pynner, or my assignes, during my naturall life, the su'me of Ten pounds per

annum of lawfull money of England (as by the feoffm^t thereof made more at large it may and doth appeare). Item: whereas Elizabeth Pell, the wife of Will'm Pell, thelder, and John Pell, their sonne, did take like paines about me, as is before menc'oned, in the time of my great callamity & heavie visitation, as is aboue specified, I doe giue and bequeath vnto the said Will'm Pell & John Pell all & singler such su'me & su'mes of money as the said Will'm & John doe owe vnto mee, either by lond, bills, or any waies or meanes what soeu'. Item: in considerac'on that John Newgate, of Bury St. Edmund, malster, diuers & sondry times hath come and resorted to comfort & conferr wth me in the time of my sorrowe & heavines, I doe giue & bequeath vnto him the said John Newgate the su'me of ffoure pounds of lawfull money of England, to be paid vnto him w^{hin} one yere next after my decease. Item: whereas Rob't Walker, of Bury aforesaid, stationer, was somewhat helpfull vnto me at the said time of my visitac'on, I doe giue & bequeath vnto the said Rob't Walker the su'me of ffortie shillings of lawfull money of England, to be paid vnto him within one yere next after my decease."*

In 1665, in anticipation of the coming of the plague, the Corporation, on the 10th of August, directed "the greate Barne, called Almoner's Barne", to be provided as a pest-house†.

The last visitation of the plague in this country was in this year, when, in about six months, by the smallest computation, made by the Earl of Clarendon (who thought it much underrated), 160,000 people in London fell by the destroying angel. The plague never appeared there again after the rebuilding of the city in a more open and airy manner; "which removed several nuisances, which, if not the actual origin of a plague, was assuredly one great *pabulum* when it had seized our streets".‡

The Small-pox has been a frequent visitant of Bury in its most terrible forms. In 1677 (says Gillingwater§) it was so prevalent that the people resorting to the market, by the Risbygate road, were accustomed to dip their money in water (tradition says vinegar) which had been placed in the cavity of the ruined base of the boundary cross, situate at the bottom of Chalk Lane, with the view of preventing any infection being conveyed to the neighbouring towns and villages.

In 1684, the town was so severely visited, that the Corporation appointed persons to ascertain the number of families visited by the disease, and desired the churchwardens to make returns of the numbers who had died between May in that year and 20th January, 1684-5. These documents, it is believed, are no longer in existence. The deaths

* Bury Wills, p. 172.

† Corporation Minutes.

‡ Pennant's London, p. 348.

§ Hist. Bury, p. 226.

are not distinguished in the Parish Registers; but the mortality appears to have been great during the two preceding years. Another severe visitation of the same terrible scourge occurred in 1718, on which occasion the then Earl of Bristol gave the sum of 100*l.* to the Corporation “to be disposed of to such families as have been and are the greatest sufferers thereby”. But the most fatal year was that of 1756-7, when the small pox “came into the town” in November, 1756, and continued till the August following; during which period 166 persons are recorded as dying of it in the parish of St. Mary alone.* Between April, 1767, and February, 1768, 76 persons are entered in the Register* of the same parish as dying of this disease, several of whom are stated to have been “inoculated”; a means of alleviation introduced but a few years previous by Dr. Dimsdale† of Hertford, afterwards Baron Dimsdale of the Russian Empire, so created for his successful inoculation of the Empress Catherine and the Grand-Duke Paul.

The epidemic disease called the Influenza raged in the town in the month of May, 1782. No rank or condition, age, sex, or temperament escaped; but very few died save old, asthmatic, and persons previously ill. It continued not above six weeks, and seldom held any one above a fortnight, though relapses, even a third and fourth, were common. It sometimes went successively through families; at other times they were all seized at once; and to others very few were in each attacked.‡

These brief notes may not inappropriately be concluded by an attempt to preserve the names of some of the deceased professors.

Thomas Stacy, the elder, surgeon, was executor to the will of Agas Herte, 1522.§

Andrew Turner, Doctor of Physic, died in 1623. By his will, dated 15th September, 1621,|| it appears that he possessed an estate at Stoke by Clare; and having left it with his other property to the uses of his wife Anne, and their

* In the St. James's Register the deaths are not distinguished, except by the repetition of infantile ages.

† Author of a work on Inoculation, in 8vo, for many years the standard work

on variolous diseases.

‡ See Med. Trans. Coll. Physic, iii. art. 8.

§ Bury Wills, p. 118.

|| Registr. Wills, Lib. Harrild, f. 62*d*.

three children, Andrew, Anne, and Marie, directed that all his deeds and evidences should be kept in a box or coffer with three locks, till the youngest child should be of age; and that one key should be kept by the executor; another by the wife; and the third by the Minister of Stoke, or of the place wherein his wife should reside.

Thomas Perkyn, physician, died in 1630; leaving property* at Tarlinge, in Essex, to his wife Lettice, and his two daughters, Rebecca and Mary.

Thomas Goodchild, also a physician, died the same year; leaving issue one son, Thomas, and one daughter, Elizabeth. By his will† he left his tenement in Raught Street to his wife Luce for life.

Jasper Despotine, an Italian physician, settled at Bury about the year 1611, being introduced into practice by his friend Bishop Bedell, whom he accompanied to England on his return from the chaplaincy of the Embassy at Venice. It is probable that Despotine was a convert from Rome through the zeal and abilities of that distinguished prelate, for it is stated in the life of Bedell that “being disgusted with the corruptions of Romish worship, he came over to breathe a freer air”. He became eminent in his profession, and dying in 1650, bequeathed his manor of Nedging in this county, with other property, to his widow and daughters.‡

Matthew Nelson, doctor of physick, is recorded in St. Mary's register as being buried Dec. 19, 1681.

John Vivion, doctor of physick, was buried in St. Mary's parish Nov. 28, 1698.

T. Crask, M. D., by will dated 1718, gave 100*l.* for the support of the charity schools of this town.§

Richard Child, M. D., commenced his professional career in this town. He was of Emanuel College, Cambridge, and took his degree of M. D. in 1650. He married Margaret, sister of his college friend, the Rev. John Meadows, of Ousden, ejected for nonconformity. In 1656, as appears from the Corporation Minutes (vol. 1, fol. 16), “Richard Child, Doctor of phisicke, did by a friend of his free lie offer to the Corporac'on to give his advise to the poore sick people within this burghe, not expecting anie fee or reward

* Registr. Wills, Lib. Corner, f. 27.

† Ibid. f. 129.

‡ Bury Wills, p. 200.

§ Gillingwater's Hist. Bury, p. 260.

for the same, which free and charitable offer was verie kindlie accepted of by the Corporacion, and therevpon ordered that thankes bee given to the said Doctor for his said free and charitable offer." Dr. Child died about 1662, leaving a widow and several children.

The beneficent *Dr. Poley Clopton* was a resident practitioner. He was the second son of William Clopton, Esq., of Liston Hall, Essex, and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Wm. Poley, of Boxted, Kt. Dying Oct. 31, 1730, aged 56, he left the greater part of his estate for the founding of the asylum in this town which bears his name. A monument to his memory is in Liston church.

To his contemporary, *Dr. Martin Warren*, and his two wives, there are monuments in St. Mary's church.

The eccentric *Messenger Monsey* here commenced the practice of medicine. He was the son of a Norfolk clergyman, received his education at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, and studied physic under Sir Benjamin Wrench, at Norwich. A "fortunate accident" was the occasion of his leaving Bury. Lord Godolphin, grandson of the Duke of Marlborough, being on a journey to his seat at Gogmagog, near Newmarket, was taken exceedingly ill. The only medical aid next at hand was at the town of Bury. Dr. Monsey was called in, and proved so successful in his applications, as not only to reinstate his lordship in a comfortable degree of health, but to engage also throughout life the warmest gratitude of his noble patient. Lord Godolphin found with surprise his rural physician to be a man of candour, of cheerfulness, of literary talents, and of convivial wit; and felt strongly disposed to patronise one so very superior in all respects to the situation in which he found him. Upon his lordship's recovery his offers were so very liberal and kind, that Dr. Monsey could not hesitate to accompany his patron to town. A vacancy occurring in Chelsea Hospital, by his lordship's interest he was appointed, in 1742, Physician to the Royal Hospital; but so necessary had the Doctor's company become to his patron, that he was to be allowed to reside as usual at St. James's, which he did till his lordship's decease, when he removed to Chelsea, where he died Dec. 26, 1788, at the advanced age of 94. Monsey was also the companion of Sir Robert Walpole, who used

to call him "his Norfolk Doctor". He was a great billiard player. Sir Robert said one day to him, "I don't know how it is, Monsey, but you are the only man I can't beat." "They get places", replied the Doctor; "I get a dinner and praise." As a physician he was skilful and benevolent, and much respected by all the pensioners, particularly for his marked attention to them. But his reputation rests principally upon his wit, in which he bore a great resemblance to Dean Swift. "The exuberance of his wit (says Boswell), which, like the web of life, was of a mingled yarn, often rendered his conversation exceedingly entertaining, sometimes indeed alarmingly offensive, and at other times pointedly pathetic and instructive." The following anecdote is said to be well attested.* He lived so long in his office of Physician to Chelsea Hospital, that the reversion of his place had been successively promised to medical friends of the various Paymasters General of the Forces. Looking out of his window one day, and observing a gentleman below examining the college and gardens, who he knew had secured the reversion of his place, the Doctor came down stairs and accosted him with, "Well, Sir, I see you are examining your house and gardens that *are to be*, and I will assure you that they are both very pleasant and very convenient. But I must tell you one circumstance: you are the fifth man that has had the reversion of the place, and I have buried them all. And what is more," continued he, looking very scientifically at him, "there is something in your face that tells me I shall bury you too." The event justified the prediction; and what is more extraordinary, at the time of the Doctor's death there was not a person who seems to have even solicited the promise of a reversion.

On the morning of the day of his death, being at breakfast, he said to his attendant, "I shall certainly lose the game"; and upon her asking him what game? he replied, "The game of *a hundred*, which I have played for very earnestly many years, but I shall lose it now; for I expect to die in a few hours."

By his will he left his body to Mr. Forster, surgeon, of Union's Court, Broad Street, for dissection, and afterwards "the remainder of his carcase may be put into a hole, or

* Faulkner's Hist. Chelsea, ii. 270.

crammed into a box with holes, and thrown into the Thames, at the pleasure of the surgeon." Mr. Forster delivered a discourse in the theatre of Guy's Hospital at the dissection, and made a sketch of the Doctor, from which Bromley engraved a good portrait. His epitaph, by himself, was very curious and profane, quite in accordance with his directions as to his body.

John Kerrich, M.D., a native of Norfolk, educated at Caius College, Cambridge, commenced and ended his professional career in this town. He died on the 9th of October, 1765, aged 70; and a monument, with a highly eulogistic epitaph, was erected to his memory in St. Mary's church by his widow. "He was never at ease himself whilst his patient was in pain or danger; nor found any diminution of his fellow feeling in the misery of others from a long acquaintance by his practice with sickness or suffering. The profession of physic was in his hands a general fund of charity for the indigent, for he chose to make it subservient to the acquisition of treasures in heaven rather than upon earth."

Misael Remon Malfalqueyrat, M.D., a native of France, carried on an extensive practice in midwifery in this town. He was supposed to have brought more children into the world than any person then living. He died Nov. 20, 1789, aged 87, seventy of which had been passed in Bury, and was buried in the churchyard, where there is a monument to his memory.*

His contemporary, *William Norford*, M.D., died in March, 1793, aged 73. His monument in St. James's church states that "in an extensive practice of more than 32 years," he was "universally respected for his professional talents, and beloved for his private virtues." He was the author of a work entitled "*Concisæ et Practicæ Observationes de Inter-mittentibus Febribus curandis*," &c., 4to, Bury, 1780.

In 1783, *Dr. Berkenhout*, from Winchester, settled in the town, and as there was "no public hospital in the county of Suffolk for the relief of diseased poor people", advertised

* Till within a few years there was also a monument to a midwife who "had assisted at the births of 4323 living children"; and a memorial still exists to *Mary Martin*, a midwife of an earlier

date, of whom it is recorded in the Register of St. Mary's that she died at the age of 83, "and by her office brought into the world 2237 children, as by her book it doth at large appeare."

his intention to give gratuitous advice to all who should present to him on the Wednesday certificates signed by the minister, &c., of the parishes to which they belonged. So great was the opposition to this step, on the part of his professional brethren, that he felt it necessary in the following year to defend himself by public advertisement, and to declare his reasons for coming to Bury. These were, that there was then

“no physician in that town or neighbourhood; that there was indeed a surgeon and man-midwife, who practised also as a physician; but that as there is no example of these three faculties being practically accumulated in one person, that gentleman, if he even had an academical education, could not be considered as a physician; that the surgeons in Bury and its environs were justly offended at this unfair, unprecedented monopoly of medical practice, which they would certainly resent the moment a proper opportunity should be afforded them.” He then proceeds: “To evince the impracticability of opposing Dr. N. (Norford?) with success, it has been asserted that no less than *nine* successive physicians had tried the experiment in vain. The truth of this assertion is best known to the inhabitants, but it is impossible to avoid observing that if among these nine there were one regular physician, this story is the keenest satire on the town and neighbourhood that could possibly have been imagined.”

Dr. Berkenhout died on the 4th of April, 1791, at Besselsleigh, in Oxford, where he had gone for change of air, in his 61st year. He was the son of a Dutch merchant, settled at Leeds, in Yorkshire, and was designed for the same profession, but going to the Continent to study Foreign languages, he entered into the military service of the King of Prussia, in which he attained the rank of Captain. On the commencement of war between England and France in 1756, he came home and had a similar commission in the English service. Peace taking place in 1760, he studied physic at Edinburgh, and in 1765 took his degree of M.D. at the university of Leyden. Having gone to America with the Commissioners sent to treat with the Colonies, he was taken prisoner; and for his sufferings and services he enjoyed a pension from Government. He was the author of “*Clavis Anglica Linguae Botanicae*,” “*Outlines of the Natural History of Great Britain*,” “*Symptomatology*,” “*Biographia Literaria*,” “*First Lines of the Theory and Practice of Chemistry*,” and a continuation of “*Campbell’s Lives of Admirals*”. Of the “*Biographia Literaria*” only the first volume was published, containing an historical survey of British Literature to the reign of Elizabeth.

At Bury also, *Dr. Hyde Wollaston*, a name inseparably connected with chemical science, practised for some years

before his removal to London, for the meridian of which his friends thought him more particularly qualified; but after some years he relinquished his professional practice, and directed his thoughts more to matters of general science, in the cultivation of which his name is eminently conspicuous. His discovery of the malleability of platinum, it has been asserted, produced him 30,000*l.*; and the Royal Society, a few weeks before his death, awarded him one of the Royal medals for his paper on the subject, read during that session. He died unmarried on the 22nd of December, 1828, aged 62, and was buried at Chiselhurst, in Kent. A short time before his death, Dr. Wollaston presented to the Royal Society the sum of 1000*l.*, the interest of which to be annually employed towards the encouragement of experiments.

SAMUEL TYMMS.



